

EWING • GARBETT • WOODARD

# LOKI

AGENT OF ASGARD





## THIS IS THE STORY OF LOKI.

A STORY THAT BEGAN WITH ODIN, SON OF BOR, BROTHER TO VILI, VE AND CUL THE SERPENT. FIRST THE PRINCE OF ASGARD -- IN THE TIME BEFORE TIME, THE TIME OF LEGENDS -- AND THEN ITS KING. IT WAS DURING HIS REIGN THAT ODIN ADOPTED LOKI, SON OF THE FROST GIANT LAUFEY.

LOKI, WHO BECAME GOD OF EVIL. LOKI, WHO IS TRYING TO CHANGE.

LOKI, WHO RECENTLY ACQUIRED GRAM, THE SWORD OF TRUTH, ORIGINALLY WIELDED BACK DURING THE TIME OF LEGENDS BY SIGURD THE EVER-GLORIOUS.  
(WHO STILL WANDERS THE EARTH TODAY.)

LOKI, WHO HAS STRUCK A BARGAIN WITH THE ALL-MOTHER -- THE RULING TRIUMVIRATE OF ASGARDIA. TASKS PERFORMED IN RETURN FOR ABSOLUTION.

BUT, AS LOKI KNOWS DEEP IN HIS HEART, SOME CRIMES CANNOT BE ABSOLVED.

AND NOW THERE IS ANOTHER LOKI, WHO ARRIVED IN ASGARDIA BY FOUL MEANS TO MAKE THE ALL-MOTHER A PROPOSITION OF HIS OWN. AN OLDER LOKI...  
WHO IS, IN HIS OWN WAY...

...THE AGENT OF ASGARD.

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## THIS IS THE STORY OF LOKI'S LETTER COLUMN.

THERE CAME A DAY WHEN MARVEL SOLD ALL ITS AD-SPACE -- A NOBLE FEAT, BUT ONE THAT CAME AT A GREAT PRICE, FOR 'T WAS NO ROOM FOR A LETTER COLUMN THIS MONTH OR NEXT.

BUT READERS WERE STILL ENTREATED TO SEND LETTERS TO MHEROES@MARVEL.COM. AND WHAT'S MORE, THEY COULD JOURNEY TO WWW.MARVEL.COM RIGHT THIS VERY MOMENT AND SEE SUCH MISSIVES ANSWERED -- VERILY, E'EN BY THE CREATIVE TEAM THEMSELVES, THOUGH NOT IN THIS MERRIE COD-MEDIEVAL CADENCE, FOR 'TIS STARTING TO SOUND A BIT SILLY.

HEY NONNY NONNY.



**MEANWHILE...**  
A DANK, DARK CELL IN  
THE DEPTHS OF ASGARDIA.

BRAVE  
HEART,  
VERITY.

OH, HOW  
SWEET.

WHAT A  
PRECIOUS  
LITTLE GIRL-  
CHILD I AM.

PHUFF

ENOUGH.

THE ALL-  
MOTHER HAS  
AFFORDED ME A  
FINE CELL--AND ONE  
WITHOUT DOORS, A  
SURE SIGN OF THEIR  
TRUST IN MY  
COUNSEL--

--BUT  
A GOD OF  
EVIL CANNOT  
SIT IDLE  
FOREVER.

CRICK

TIME  
RUNS, THE CLOCK  
WILL STRIKE, THE  
FUTURE WILL COME.  
PREPARATIONS  
MUST BE  
MADE.

TO  
WORK, OLD  
TRICKSTER.

TO  
WORK



*This is the story of Loki.*

*A story between drafts. In the process of being rewritten.*

*Loki wanders the world, performing the All-Mother's missions, earning his rewards--old crimes forgotten. Parts of the story erased.*

*The story is in flux. Gaps form in the narrative, through which a new story may be written. A new story...*

*...of the past.*

## Your Life Is A Story I've Already Written

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Once upon  
a time...

...cunning old Loki  
made his way to the  
Old Realm, in  
the time of legends.

Where he met a princeling  
of those long-ago days, on  
the road to seek his fortune.

HO!

I RUN  
MORE WHEN  
SICK THAN WHEN  
HEARTY. I BLUSH  
LIKE A MAIDEN WHEN  
IN MY CUPS, AND  
I SMELL EVEN  
AFTER I BATHE.

WHO  
AM I?

WHY--  
I KNOW  
NOT--

NO, ODIN  
BORSON?

SURELY I AM AS  
PLAIN AS THE NOSE  
ON YOUR FACE?

HA! YOU  
KNOW ME  
THEN, OLD  
ONE?

WHAT  
FELLOW OF  
ASGARD DOES  
NOT KNOW ITS  
PRINCE?

AS FOR ME,  
I AM LOKI--A  
HUMBLE TELLER OF  
TALL TALES, SMALL  
MISCHIEFS, AND  
RIDDLES.

THEN COME  
WALK WITH  
YOUR PRINCE,  
OLD LOKI.

FOR THE  
WAY IS LONG,  
AND THE ROAD IS  
QUIET, AND I WOULD  
HEAR MORE OF  
YOUR EXCELLENT  
RIDDLES.

AS YOU  
WISH, YOUNG  
PRINCE.

'Twas as Loki wished  
too, though he kept  
that close.





Shortly thereafter, the two came to a running river--and there beheld a strange sight:

An otter, large as a man.

~NEEEEK~



The beast beheld them of its turn, and nodded its head once--as to say, "Good day, fine gentlefolk."

~NEEE-EEK~

'TIS TRULY A WONDROUS CREATURE...!

AYE.



THUNK

WONDROUS.

LOKI--!

But the deed was done, and 'twas no return from it. And otter meat has a fine, strong taste.



Still, Odin was troubled.

THE OTTER BADE US NO ILL, LOKI. WHAT MADE YOU DO SUCH A THING?

THE MISCHIEF IN ME, ODIN BORSON.



BUT WAS NOT THE MEAT GOOD, PRINCE? IS NOT THE FUR LUSTROUS?

SEE! IT HAS MADE GOOD CLOAKS FOR US BOCH!

So Odin let his worries pass.



Later, as the day grew long and the air grew chill...

HO!

TRAVELERS!

...the two gods came to the inn of Hriedmar, of the Vanir, and his three sons.

RIGHT SORRY AM I THAT MY THIRD SON, OER THE CHANGER OF SHAPES, HAS NOT YET JOINED US...

O-OER? CHANGER OF SHAPES?

AYE! HIS MA WAS A WITCH OF SVARTALFHEIM, AND HE HAS THE TALENT BY BIRTH.

I SENT HIM OUT AS A RIVER-BEAST, FOR TO CATCH OUR SUPPER. 'TIS NOT LIKE HIM AS TO BE SO LATE...

LOKI-- WE SHOULD TAKE OUR LEAVE--

SAY NOT SO, LAD! THE NIGHT IS COLD, OUR FIRE IS WARM-- WHY WOULD A WEARY VOYAGER WISH TO LEAVE US?

I KNOW THE WHY OF IT!

THEY WEAR IT ON THEIR BACKS!

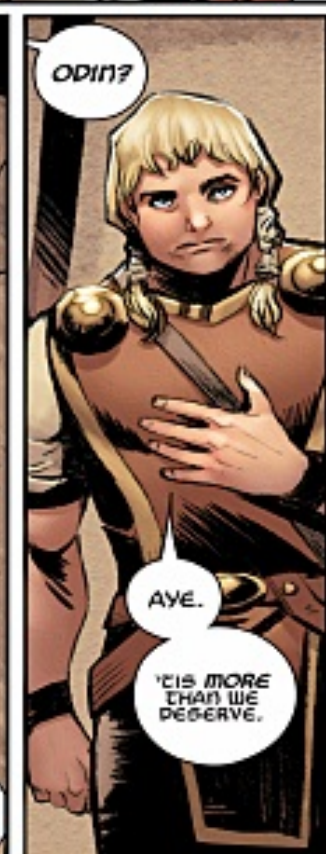
THE SKIN OF OUR DEAD BROTHER, OER--

--MURDERED BY THEIR HAND!

WHAT--?!

'Twas an ill hour for Bor's son.







Now, 'twas but one hoard of gold that could cover such fine otter-skins with no hair showing.

The hoard of Andvari The Dwarf--a treasure taken in the very forming-days of Nidavellir, and greatest in the realms.

So vast and valuable it was, that Andvari could not let it pass from his sight for a moment, lest it vanish away.

And so, with magic, Andvari took the shape of a giant pike--so strong and slippery that neither hook nor net nor magic could land him.

Until Loki came.

WHO GOES THERE?

LOKI Am I--LIAR, TRICKSTER, AND COME FOR YOUR GOLD! SO FORK IT OVER, OLD FISH!

HA! WHY SHOULD I, LIAR? HAVE YOU ROD OR NET OR HANDS THAT CAN CATCH ME?

I HAVE NOT.

AND HAVE YOU ANY SPELL THAT CAN HOLD OR COMPEL ME?

none that can.

THEN WHAT HAVE YOU, LOKI THE LIAR?



ONE OF THESE.

And Loki reached deep into his carrying-bag...

...and brought out an M20 recoilless rocket launcher.

**BOOM**

**AWK!**

**BRooooooooom**

For Andvari could only guard against what he could think of. And wise as he was in the ways of magic...

...he was somewhat unimaginative.

INJUSTICE! MURDER AND THEFT! AND ALL WILL KNOW IT, LOKI THE LIAR!

GO ON...

my DEATH-CURSE ON THIS GOLD-- MAY IT FORCE TRUTH UPON ALL!

SO ALL WILL KNOW HOW FOUL LOKI MURDERED POOR ANDVARI... NO MATTER...

...NO MATTER HOW HE LIES...

And such a curse might have troubled Loki...









Hriedmar the forgiving.

Regin the vengeful.

FATHER...MY  
BROTHER...

I WILL...  
SEE YOU  
DEAD...



And Fafnir the greedy.

Fafnir, who slew his  
family for a hoard  
of cursed gold...



...or so he  
supposed.

For vengeance is a  
hard thing to murder  
entirely.

I WILL  
SEE YOU DEAD,  
FAFNIR. BY MY  
HAND, OR BY MY  
SWORD IN  
ANOTHER'S.

YOU AND  
HIGH-NOSED  
ASGARD  
BOTH...



The brothers were thus  
resolved, each to their  
own obsessions.

HA HA  
HA! GOLD!  
BEAUTIFUL  
GOLD!

I'LL  
NEVER  
LEAVE  
YOU!



Regin tended his vengeance,  
forging and tempering it like  
a thing of steel...

I NAME  
THEE GRAM,  
FAFNIR'S  
DEATH--

--AND  
ASGARD'S  
BANE.



And Fafnir  
tended his gold.

Like Andvari before him,  
he could not leave it--  
aye, even for a moment.

And so his body--  
starved for food  
and water--drank  
of curse-magic  
to survive.

Andvari's great truth-  
spell seeped into Fafnir's  
blood and his bone...

And changed  
him.


Aye, until his *outsides*  
matched his *true insides*.

Until Fafnir was as he'd  
always been--an ugly  
monster squatting in  
a bed of his own making.

A great and  
hideous dragon...

...waiting for a  
handsome prince  
to end him.





And now Sigurd  
The Ever-Glorious  
enters our tale.

Sigurd, first hero of  
Asgard's legends, and  
to some the greatest.

Sigurd, who shrank not from  
impossible odds--be they  
on the battlefield...

...or other places.

A new chapter, then.  
Once upon a time...

(Though his heart  
opened to none, and  
his false promises  
were the tarnish  
of his glory.)

...Sigurd the sometimes-  
glorious rode alone through  
the Old Realm, to come  
upon the inn of Regin  
Hriedmarson...



...who knew a hero of Asgard when he cast eyes on one.

HO, HERO.

WHAT SAYS YOU IF I KNOW A DRAGON IN NEED OF SLAYING?

ONE WHO GUARDS THE GREATEST GOLD-HOARD IN ALL THE REALMS?

I'D SAY, "LET ME DRINK IN PEACE WITHOUT YOUR CALL TALES." O INNKEEPER.

PEACE I'LL KNOW NOT WHILE THAT BEAST LIVES.

YEARS SPENT I, SEARCHING OUT ITS LAIR, AND A SWORD I DID FORGE-- ONE THAT CUTS DRAGON-HIDE LIKE BUTTER.

BUT WITH THIS LAME LEG, I'LL NOT GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO SWING IT...

...  
NO PROMISES, BUT SHOW ME THE SWORD.

SHHFFF

BURI'S BONES! IT CUTS SOLID OAK LIKE EMPTY AIR--

AYE, AND 'TIS YOURS, IF YOU BUT AID ME. THE DRAGON-GOLD TOO, IF YOU BRING ME FAFNIR'S HEART.

FOR I'VE HEARD THAT THOSE WHO FEAST ON DRAGON-HEART CANNOT DIE BUT BY MAGIC.

THEN STROKE YOUR FIRE AND WARM YOUR TABLE, GOOD SIR INNKEEPER.

AND TOMORROW, I'LL SLAY YOUR DRAGON.



11 And on the  
morrow, he did.





Some say when Fafnir fell, his spilled blood formed a pool from which the King of Nastrond drank, years later, and became his twin.

It keeps the stories straight, for Fafnir is in many.

But to hold to Sigurd's tale-- the hoard of Andvari was his, and the curse too. And more of that anon.

Sigurd let the gold be, as none would be fool enough to steal it from him. He took but two things from that dark cave:

The dragon's blood--which sprayed across him from the death-wound, thick enough to taste...

...and the dragon's heart, which he roasted whole for that very day's supper.

SIGURD.

BEWARE.

DID YOU SAY  
SOMETHING,  
REGIN?

NOT  
I.

ASGARDIAN.





YOU HAVE  
TASTED THE  
BLOOD OF  
FAMIR, O  
SIGURD.

BLOOD THICK  
WITH A CURSE  
THAT BRINGS OUT  
THE TRUTH IN ALL  
THINGS. SUCH  
AS BIRD-  
SPEECH.

SIGURD.

BEWARE.

REGIN...  
THAT  
MAGPIE...

TURN YOUR  
EYES TO THE  
SPIT. WE MUST  
EAT THE HEART  
THE VERY  
MOMENT  
'TIS DONE.

IF YOU  
INSIST.

AYE,  
THAT'S IT.  
KEEP YOUR EYE  
WHERE 'TIS  
WANTED.

THINK OF  
THE JUSTICE  
WE'LL BRING ABOUT  
WHEN NO MORTAL  
WEAPON MIGHT  
END US.

KEEP YOUR  
EYE STEADY,  
HERO--FOR THE  
PERFECT  
MOMENT--

BEWARE.

--OF YOUR  
DEATH--

OH.

Gram's blade, steeped as it had been in truth-cursed blood, was now as piercing as the truth itself.

Thus, even such a grievous wound as this was not a mortal one. Most often, the truth only hurts.



But Regin's truth was terrible indeed.

OH.

NO.

He'd thought himself an *avenger*, wringing *justice* for his family--from Fafnir and any Asgardian he crossed the path of.

But Gram told him a truth hidden even from himself:

That there was no justice in him. He was a *killer* who'd found his *excuse* to kill--and that was all.

That was the truth that stopped his heart.

AND NOW, BIRD?

NOW?

EAT THE DRAGON'S HEART. BECOME UNMORTAL. BE TWICE THE HERO YOU EVER WERE.

MAKE YOUR NEW SWORD A THING OF LEGEND, IN THE TIME LEFT TO YOU.

THE TIME LEFT TO ME?

NOT LONG, FIRST HERO OF ASGARD.

NOT LONG AT ALL.

The magpie was a teller of falsehoods, but there were none in that.

For the years passed--and one day Sigurd's own false heart caught up to him.



When Sigurd ran from Aesgard, leaving his magic sword behind, 'twas said he did it to escape the wrath of Bor, the king, father of young Prince Odin.

But truly, he ran to escape his obligations.

(You may enjoy more of this tale in *Journey into Mystery* #638, should you wish it.)

Bor himself died some years after.

And few mourned him.

WHAT...  
WHAT NOW, CUL?

BROTHER,  
WHAT DO WE  
DO NOW?

I SUPPOSE  
THAT... I AM  
THE ALL-  
FATHER.

AND  
I SHALL  
RULE.

But among Bor's effects--boxed up, long forgotten--lay Gram.

Forged by Regin. Bathed in Fafnir's blood. Cast to legend by Sigurd The Ever-Glorious.

The hero's blade, and Aesgard's bane.

HAIL,  
PRINCE  
ODIN.

Ready at last for its real purpose.



THE  
TIME HAS  
COME...

...TO  
REMEMBER  
YOUR  
DEBT.

THE OLD  
MAN OF  
RIDDLES--

LOKI, ODIN  
BORSON. NOT  
THAT YOU'LL  
REMEMBER.

AND THERE  
IS MY SWORD,  
MADE FROM MAGIC  
AND TIME AND  
STORY, MADE TO MY  
SPECIFICATIONS.

REMEMBER THE BOX  
YOU BUILT FOR ME? PLACE  
THE SWORD IN IT. LOCK  
THE FIVE LOCKS,  
SCATTER THE  
FIVE KEYS.

YOU'LL  
FORGET EXACTLY  
WHO TOLD YOU TO.  
I KNOW HOW THIS  
MANNER OF STORY  
WORKS.

BUT THE  
LEGEND WILL  
SPREAD, AND GROW.

A HERO'S  
BLADE, LOCKED  
AWAY WITH KEYS  
FORGED BY ODIN  
HIMSELF...

FOR  
LOKI.

THIS?

THIS  
IS NO  
ONE, ODIN  
BORSON.

I--I  
WILL DO IT,  
FOR IT HARMS  
NO ONE,  
BUT--

--WHO  
IS THAT,  
OLD ONE?

NO ONE  
IMPORTANT.

THOUGH  
HE WILL  
BE SOON--  
OH, YES.

VERY

VERY

SOON



**UP A MOUNTAIN,  
REDUX. THE PRESENT DAY.**

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF...

...OH,  
COME ON,  
SERIOUSLY?

SERIOUSLY?  
HE GOT HERE  
ALREADY? HOW  
DID HE EVEN  
KNOW?

IT'S ONLY  
BEEN A COUPLE  
DOZEN MILLENNIA--  
I MEAN, I BARELY  
FOUND OUT ABOUT IT  
MYSELF AND IT'S  
MY DAMN  
SWORD--

DAMNIT.

OKAY, YOU  
KNOW WHAT? LOKI'S  
GOT MY SWORD--THAT'S  
NO PROBLEM. THAT'S FINE.

**SIGURD, THE  
SOMETIMES-GLORIOUS.**

I'LL JUST  
GO STEAL IT  
BACK.

**NEXT: OF COURSE YOU  
REALIZE THIS MEANS WAR.**







